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GROUP 3600

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 8 are cancelled.

9. (currently amended) A method for picking up and handling filled, sealed, rectangular pouches where each of said pouches comprises two lateral films with a bottom side U-shaped folded bottom film between the lateral films and where the pouches stand on one of two longitudinal sides and are arranged in parallel in a row, and on a facing upper longitudinal side and are picked up with a gripper mechanism having finger-like gripper elements that are arranged in a comb-like manner, wherein the gripper elements are moved in a parallel path between adjacent upper longitudinal sides of adjacent pouches, in a longitudinal direction of the upper longitudinal sides, from the bottom side and pass the same.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein a row of 5 to 100 pouches is simultaneously gripped.

11. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the gripping mechanism has a pair of gripper elements between which an upper longitudinal side of a pouch can be gripped for each pouch to be picked up at least one of which is movable or has movable elements.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11, wherein said movable element is an extendable piston enabling a longitudinal side of a pouch to be picked up in clamping manner.

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein each pouch has lateral edges and the pouches are gripped in an orientation, where a main extension plane

containing all of the lateral edges, of where the pouches are gripped in an orientation in which the main extension plane of each pouch is inclined to the vertical by an angle of less than 60°.

14. (currently amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein the main extension plane of each pouch to be gripped is substantially vertical.

15. (original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the particular longitudinal side on which each pouch stands has a horizontal orientation.